

Volunteers for Prosperity

Experience Changing the World.



Annual Report 2005

VOLUNTEERS FOR PROSPERITY IS A PRESIDENTIAL INITIATIVE OF USA FREEDOM CORPS



“Today, I would like to announce a new USA Freedom Corps initiative called Volunteers for Prosperity, which will give America’s highly skilled professionals new opportunities to serve abroad. The program will enlist American doctors and nurses and teachers and engineers and economists and computer specialists and others to work on specific development initiatives, including those that I have discussed today. These volunteers will serve in the countries of their choice, for however long their project takes. Like generations before us, this generation of citizens will show the world the energy and idealism of the United States of America.”

President George W. Bush
May 21, 2003

CONTENTS

Director’s Message	2
Partner and Volunteer Participation on the Rise	4
New Challenges and Opportunities	6
VfP in the Spotlight	10
Looking to the Future	14
VfP and the U.S. Global Health and Prosperity Agenda	16
VfP Partner Profiles	22

WHAT IS VOLUNTEERS FOR PROSPERITY?

Volunteers for Prosperity (VfP) is an interagency initiative established by President Bush's Executive Order 13317 on September 25, 2003, to encourage volunteer service by highly skilled Americans supporting major U.S. efforts to promote health and prosperity around the world. Working under the direction of U.S. nonprofits and companies, volunteers are deployed to developing countries on flexible, short-term assignments ranging from a few weeks to several months.

The Office of Volunteers for Prosperity at the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), the federal government's interagency coordinator of the initiative, is building a network of partner organizations that implement volunteer activities supporting the U.S. global health and prosperity agenda. The office hosts a website that helps to match individual volunteers with opportunities for service with appropriate VfP partner organizations.

Partner organizations can receive special consideration in applications for federal grants awarded by the Departments of State (State), Commerce (Commerce), Health and Human Services (HHS), and USAID in six critical development initiatives. These include the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR); Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI); Digital Freedom Initiative (DFI); Water for the Poor Initiative; Trade for African Development and Enterprise (TRADE); and Millennium Challenge Account (MCA).

The U.S. global health and prosperity agenda focuses on helping developing countries advance in the following areas: democratic governance, economic growth, education, HIV/AIDS treatment and prevention, clean water, agricultural development, information and communications technology, trade and investment, natural resources management, and women and youth empowerment.

WHO CAN PARTNER WITH VFP?

The Office of Volunteers for Prosperity at USAID actively identifies and recruits organizations that meet the following criteria:

- are organized under the laws of the United States, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, or any other territory of the United States, and have headquarters in the United States, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, or any other territory of the United States.
- conduct or anticipate conducting overseas activities consistent with the general purposes of the federally supported initiatives upon which VfP focuses.
- sponsor or indicate willingness to sponsor highly skilled U.S. professionals who wish to work on specific U.S. development initiatives supported by VfP.

DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

Northwest Medical Teams International



Volunteers for Prosperity is an interagency Presidential initiative managed by the Office of Volunteers for Prosperity at the U.S. Agency for International Development.

Engineering Ministries International



The Volunteers for Prosperity (VfP) initiative is fulfilling the promise envisioned by President Bush when he announced its creation just two years ago. On that occasion, the President predicted that through VfP, “this generation of citizens will show the world the energy and idealism of the United States of America.” VfP has since proven its effectiveness as a vehicle promoting international voluntary service by skilled American professionals in support of the nation’s commitment to global health and prosperity.

Driving its success are the contributions of VfP’s U.S.-based partner organizations—nonprofits and companies alike—and the dedicated and selfless volunteers they deploy and direct. The Office of Volunteers for Prosperity (VfP Office), the U.S. government’s interagency coordinator for the initiative, has developed formal relationships with 220 partners. These partners now represent a pool of talented Americans numbering over 50,000 doctors, nurses, engineers, teachers, businesspeople, and others. In the past year alone, nearly 12,000 of these professionals were deployed to help manage the HIV/AIDS pandemic, improve drinking water in rural villages in Africa, provide educational opportunities to women in the Middle East, and

mentor aspiring entrepreneurs in Asia, among many other global health and prosperity activities.

During the past year, the VfP Office also

- cosponsored the Second Annual International Roundtable on Service and Volunteerism in Washington, D.C.
- formally assisted in the U.S. government’s response to the tsunami in South Asia
- worked with key organizations to create new channels for international volunteerism by American professionals, as well as new ways for VfP partners to generate resources for volunteer programs

VfP volunteers are making a difference in the lives of people around the world through important contributions to local projects, in sectors as diverse as agriculture, education, the environment, healthcare, small business, youth development, and HIV/AIDS education and prevention. At the same time, VfP volunteers are strengthening cross-cultural ties with people worldwide.

The good work of these American professionals would not be possible without the direction of those deploy-



“The good work of these American professionals would not be possible without the direction of those deploying them: the VfP partners.”



ing them: the VfP partners. These include well-known U.S.-based service organizations, as well as groups newer to voluntary service. Among the latter are organizations that had never before been involved in foreign assistance—from smaller faith-based and community groups to major corporations. In this way the initiative is furthering a new paradigm of private-public cooperation.

In keeping with the President's vision of broader, more active participation in the initiative, partner organizations can receive special consideration when applying for grants connected with the federal initiatives VfP supports. During 2005, VfP partners received in excess of \$22 million in federal grants.

The growth of the past two years will continue in earnest in 2006. During the coming year, the VfP Office will seek not only to welcome many more VfP partners and volunteers and to pursue new strategic partnerships and resources, but also to creatively support the development of a more robust international culture of volunteer service.

In addition to recognizing the dedicated efforts of VfP partners and volunteers, the VfP Office wishes to express appreciation to the leadership of the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), the federal agency that

hosts the initiative, for its ongoing support. The VfP Office would also like to thank USA Freedom Corps, the White House office charged with coordinating all federal volunteer programs, for its steady counsel.

This 2005 annual report includes an overview of recent activities and new strategic opportunities; an update on the six presidential initiatives comprising the U.S. global health and prosperity agenda; recognition of volunteers honored through the President's Volunteer Service Award program; and a look at future plans. Also included are VfP volunteers' personal accounts of recent activities, and profiles of the partners that deployed them.

America can take great pride in knowing that its nonprofits and companies, and the talented professionals they support, are improving the lives of so many throughout the world.

Jack Hawkins
Director
Office of Volunteers for Prosperity
U.S. Agency for International
Development

PARTNER AND VOLUNTEER PARTICIPATION ON THE RISE

Recognizing the central role of U.S. non-profits and companies in realizing VfP's promise, the VfP Office continued to identify and recruit additional partner organizations in federal fiscal year 2005 (October 1, 2004–September 30, 2005). By the end of FY 2005, there were 220 partner organizations, an increase of 15 percent over the previous year.

FY 2005 also saw major gains related to volunteers:

- The pool of highly skilled American professionals available through partner organizations grew nearly 60 percent, from 34,000 in FY 2004 to nearly 54,000 in FY 2005.

- In FY 2004, partner organizations reported deploying fewer than 7,000 volunteers. The number reported deployed during FY 2005 jumped 70 percent, to 12,000.
- Between FY 2004 and FY 2005, the number of volunteer opportunities available through partner organizations more than doubled, from 4,000 to over 9,000.
- Grants awarded to VfP partners during FY 2005 totaled \$22 million, an increase of more than 60 percent over the previous year.

For a continuously updated list of partner organizations, visit www.volunteersforprosperity.gov.

VFP PARTNER BENEFITS

The Volunteers for Prosperity initiative provides a number of good reasons for interested companies and non-profits to become partners. Not only does VfP offer incentives that encourage involvement with its work, it also assists partners in organizing, promoting, and honoring the efforts of volunteers within their organizations. Among the advantages of partnership:

- VfP serves as an effective clearinghouse for international volunteer opportunities through its network of partner organizations.
- The VfP website is a resource that
 - matches prospective volunteers with appropriate partner organizations
 - gives volunteers and other interested parties exposure to partners' international development and volunteer activities
 - shares volunteer success stories that show how American professionals are helping to better the lives of people all around the world
 - provides links to each partner organization's website as well as to a VfP page about each partner
- The initiative promotes recognition of service by VfP partners' volunteers. Through a simple certification process, organizations can nominate their volunteers for the President's Volunteer Service Award (www.presidentialserviceawards.gov).
- The VfP Office offers strategic counsel to organizations seeking to develop or expand their international voluntary service programs.
- VfP partners can receive special consideration in the federal grants process.

VOLUNTEER STORY

“Things often move slowly in developing countries, but progress does come—often one small step at a time.”

Edwin Requintina has a degree in inland fisheries and many years of experience in managing aquatic resources. He spent two weeks last July in the towns of Bagamoyo and Mkuranga, Tanzania, as a volunteer with the Coastal Resources Center at the University of Rhode Island (see page 22). There he served as a trainer and expert advisor to farmers raising milkfish, a popular commercial species related to catfish and carp.

Tanzania has tremendous potential for sustainable mariculture, particularly milkfish farming. However, it is important not to repeat the mistakes that have plagued milkfish production elsewhere. Doing it right means you don't cut down your mangroves, where young milkfish live in the wild; instead, you site your ponds in appropriate areas that minimize environmental damage. In Tanzania, this means the salt flats and abandoned salt ponds that are widespread along the coast. If done right, milkfish farming can become a significant source of jobs and income for the coastal poor.

Experience shows that the poor are often averse to the risks involved in becoming an entrepreneur, as any failed venture can push their already precarious economic existence over the edge. Hence, our efforts to launch a successful milkfish demonstration farm focused first on offering technical assistance to a few select entrepreneurs showing the characteristic traits of innovators and risk-takers. This approach makes

early adoption of milkfish farming more likely to succeed. In fact, this year Tanzania saw its first successful harvest and commercial marketing of farm-raised milkfish—a significant milestone. Since this operation is labor-intensive, it will benefit the community by employing local workers.

It was really satisfying for me to be able to help correct and improve the initial pond designs and management practices. Things often move slowly in developing countries, but progress does come—often one small step at a time. It is deeply fulfilling to help people identify the steps that are needed and help them gain the skills necessary to take them.



Coastal Resources Center volunteer Edwin Requintina (right) shows Tanzanian fish farmers how they can collect more milkfish fry using a Philippines-style scissors net.

NEW CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Providing Tsunami Relief

Americans responded generously and compassionately to the human suffering following the Indian Ocean tsunami. Skilled volunteers from the United States have played an important role in recovery and reconstruction efforts.

Shortly after the disaster struck, American doctors, nurses, and others trained in disaster relief teamed with VfP partners and were rapidly deployed to Sri Lanka and Indonesia to aid tsunami victims. The VfP Office, in cooperation

with USA Freedom Corps, then coordinated plans for using American professionals in longer-term reconstruction efforts in affected areas. The actions of these volunteers have contributed to a greatly improved public perception of the United States in areas affected by the tsunami.

Broadening Involvement in International Volunteerism

Currently, the VfP website allows American professionals to find opportunities to volunteer their time to the partner companies and nonprofit organizations appearing on the website. However, partners could absorb more volunteers if they had more resources.

To better serve its partner organizations, the VfP Office is collaborating with Global Giving, an organization that connects donors to projects via the internet, to develop the VfP Giving Portal. This portal will allow individuals, companies, and nonprofit organizations to donate money directly to support the international development work of companies and nonprofit organizations and their volunteers.

By teaming with Global Giving, VfP will help expand the resources available to underwrite volunteering opportunities. This portal will also help individuals and organizations learn more about VfP partners and projects and make it easier for donors to target their contributions.

continued on page 8

White House photo by Paul Morse



President George W. Bush meets Bas Vanderzalm, president of Northwest Medical Teams International, during a roundtable discussion with presidents of nongovernmental organizations in Washington, D.C., January 10, 2005.

VOLUNTEER STORY

“I feel very fortunate to have partaken in these experiences and to have a skill that can help so many people.”

Dr. Lisa Torraca has focused on disaster relief work since completing her residency in emergency medicine. In 2003, she became a disaster roster physician for Oregon-based Northwest Medical Teams International (see page 23). Dr. Torraca spent four weeks (January–February 2005) in the Aceh Province of Indonesia, providing emergency medical care to tsunami victims.

Shortly after the December 2004 tsunami, I received a call from Northwest Medical Teams International (NWMTI) asking if I could respond. Three weeks later I joined two other physicians and a nurse and traveled to Banda Aceh, capital of Aceh province on the island of Sumatra and site of the worst devastation.

We established two base camps from which to operate along the coast. One was at Lho Glumpang, a decimated coastal village about a half-hour north of Calang. While we held medical clinics at the base camp, a volunteer medical team would climb several miles through roads that were clogged with debris and flooded thigh-high to more remote villages up the mountainside. Using a backpack full of medications, they would hold mini-clinics for the villagers.

One day an Acehnese nurse carried a severely ill child, feverish and unconscious, back down through this treacherous terrain to base camp. The child received intravenous fluids and antibiotics throughout the night. By morning she was in her dad's arms, alert and improved—a life saved thanks to the heroic efforts of this nurse and the medical care made available by NWMTI.

I feel very fortunate to have partaken in these experiences and to have a skill that can help so many people. It gives a richness to my life that I might not otherwise appreciate, given the wealth of the country I live in. I hope to continue this work for a very long time.



Lisa Torraca

Lisa Torraca, a disaster roster physician with Northwest Medical Teams International, supervises treatment of a feverish little girl in a base camp set up along the Indonesian coast after last winter's tsunami (see story this page). The child had been carried several miles from a stricken village by an Indonesian nurse.

NEW CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

The portal will be developed and beta-tested in early FY 2006. When it is fully operational, prospective donors will be able to view a list of qualified projects managed by participating VfP partners and contribute directly to the projects that interest them.

Supporting Service through Innovative Collaboration

In the latter part of FY 2005, the VfP Office entered into an innovative partnership with Operation HOPE, Inc., to jointly promote volunteer service by American professionals in developing countries to advance financial literacy. Working side by side with a VfP partner on a specific global development challenge marks a new direction for the VfP Office.

A leading nonprofit organization founded in 1992 by President and CEO John Bryant, Operation HOPE in turn created HOPE Global Initiatives, a program designed to apply the United States' experience in promoting and supporting economic prosperity to people in the developing world, particularly in Africa. Through the VfP-HOPE collaboration, the program will expand to include underserved communities throughout the world.

The program will be implemented by Operation HOPE's vast network of corporate and nonprofit affiliates. These organizations will identify and recruit American professionals to serve as volunteers under arrangements that will be flexible in terms of time, duration, and location. "Virtual volunteerism," which will allow American professionals to volunteer over the internet, will be a key component of the VfP-HOPE collaboration.

"Operation HOPE is excited to be working in partnership with VfP because we share a common goal—the goal of empowering underserved communities everywhere through economic education and the provision of much-needed knowledge and expertise."

John Bryant
CEO and President
Operation HOPE
September 29, 2005

VOLUNTEER STORY

“I have learned that when one builds a home, the process can involve, educate, and benefit the greater community.”

Habitat for Humanity's new International Volunteer Program (see page 23) sent 15 volunteers to seven countries last year. One such volunteer, David Vimont, a construction specialist with a master's degree in architecture, began work in Uganda in April and will continue until December 2005. His personal experience is recounted below.

Uganda is enduring a social and economic crisis—the arrival of a generation of orphaned children. AIDS has devastated the country over the last 20 years. Families have been left with little support, and often depend upon the oldest child for the younger children's care and economic survival.

Habitat for Humanity is working on several fronts in Uganda to fill the losses left by AIDS. With the Ugandan National Construction Manager, Andrew Sekitto, Habitat has created a program of paid construction training for orphaned young adults. Over six months, these young men and women will build six houses and engage in weekly exercises emphasizing the various stages of residential construction. The ultimate goal is sustained self-employment for the learners so they may offer support for their orphaned siblings.

This Youth Apprentice Program is set to begin in two districts hard hit by AIDS, due to the large number of refugees fleeing the war in the north. The program is made possible through a USAID grant as part of the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief. My goal is to be present for the successful launching of the first three months of this program.

My experiences in Uganda's rural villages, building houses in areas where few decent shelters exist, have exposed me to the spirit that Habitat for Humanity inspires in young and old alike. I have learned that when one builds a home, the process can involve, educate, and benefit the greater community. The building industry can promote construction practices that improve upon a community's basic services and protect a region's ecology. We are beginning here in a simple way, by using Habitat house-building to train disadvantaged youth in construction skills.



David Vimont points brickwork on a Habitat for Humanity construction site in Uganda.

VFP IN THE SPOTLIGHT

Bringing Together International Voluntary Service Leaders

Jack Hawkins, Director of the VFP Office, convened the opening session of the Second Annual International Roundtable on Service and Volunteerism in Washington, D.C., on August 3, 2005. Hawkins moderated a panel that included VFP volunteer

The International Roundtable was cosponsored by the VFP Office at USAID, the Corporation for National and Community Service, and the Points of Light Foundation and Volunteer Center National Network. It featured presentations from leading national and international experts on volunteerism and service. Attendees came from more than 15 countries, including the United Kingdom, Nigeria, Bolivia, Nepal, and Israel. Fifty international nonprofits and companies were represented.

“The strength of a country is found in the hearts and souls of its citizens. Across the globe, volunteers inspire us with their dedication, compassion, and efforts to build a more hopeful world.”

President George W. Bush
Message to attendees
International Roundtable on Service and Volunteerism
Washington, D.C.
August 3, 2005

Chris Strock, a registered professional civil engineer who helped build a water system for a hospital in Nigeria. In addition, Hawkins' panel included officials from the Peace Corps and the UN Volunteers.

Honoring Volunteers Through the President's Volunteer Service Award

The selfless efforts of VFP volunteers have not gone unnoticed. In recognition of the important work they do, many have been recipients of the President's Volunteer Service Award (PVSA). The award celebrates the best in the American spirit and encourages all Americans to contribute to their communities and the nation through volunteer service.

The following VFP volunteers, working with Partners of the Americas (see page 24), received the PVSA during the past year:

- Partners of the Americas presented *Thecia Taylor* of Little Rock, Arkansas, with the Gold Level PVSA representing over 1,000 hours of volunteer service. Taylor, a member of the Arkansas/Eastern Bolivia partnership, volunteered her skills in the area of health and

continued on page 12

VOLUNTEER STORY

“We were getting a tiny glimpse of the daily lives of the almost 1 billion people around the world who have no access to clean drinking water.”

Scott Powell, a 30-year-old civil engineer whose expertise is water resources, has served around the world as a volunteer on five Engineering Ministries International (eMi) design teams for one to two weeks each. Below he recounts his most recent experience in Ethiopia.

I recently worked with several other surveyors and civil engineers to design a water supply for a village in remote southwest Ethiopia. The members of the Gewada tribe must now hike several hours each day to fetch water from the same river where they and their animals bathe and drink. The poor water source has caused a myriad of health problems for residents and students in the town.

After investigating several options, our team settled on designing a gravity-fed scheme bringing water from a clean mountain spring. The 21-kilometer pipeline will serve 18,000 people in three different villages, and will likely consist of several spring boxes, a water treatment system, storage tanks, distribution piping, and multiple community water taps.

In the tiny motel complex where we slept each night, some two hours from the project site, the town generators would frequently stop and shut down the pump that fed water into the hotel's storage tank. For two days, our design team had no access to running water at all. All of a sudden, the gravity of the global water crisis hit home. We were only getting a tiny glimpse of the daily lives of the almost 1 billion people around the world who have no access to clean drinking water.

The enormity of the need was almost overwhelming, but it inspired me to continue on with the work. Over the next few months, we will piece together a design to meet this most basic of needs—to bring water to a village.



Engineering Ministries International

Scott Powell, a civil engineer volunteering with Engineering Ministries International (see page 22), tests water quality near a village in Ethiopia. The children who are watching the process will benefit from the new water system he helped to design.

VFP IN THE SPOTLIGHT

emergency preparedness. Among her many volunteer projects, Taylor has trained Bolivian nurses to serve as CPR instructors, facilitated emergency preparedness seminars, and participated in the selection of nursing and health professionals as candidates for professional exchanges to the United States in neonatal intensive care, post-burn treatment, and occupational therapy.

- *Rosario McFarland* of Austin, Texas, was recognized as a PVSA Gold winner for her volunteer work as executive director of the Partners of the Americas chapter in Texas. Under her leadership, the Texas chapter launched numerous innovative humanitarian projects in Mexico and Peru. These included a host of

civic action programs related to family planning, community health, emergency preparedness, and domestic violence prevention.

Several VFP volunteers mobilized by the Dallas-based Partnership for the Environment (see page 24), received the PVSA for their work in Nigeria and Colombia:

- *Jon Low*, a local Red Cross official from Roanoke, Virginia; *Chris Strock*, a civil engineer from Richmond, Virginia; and *Keith Bruce*, an officer of the Baptist General Convention of Texas in Dallas, were honored for their service in Nigeria. They are among the Partnership for the Environment (PFE) volunteers who worked to bring clean water and sanitation systems to the town of Ogbomoso in Oyo State, Nigeria. These systems will serve the Baptist Medical Centre of Ogbomoso, related clinics and schools, and the surrounding community.
- PFE volunteers *Robert Brown*, chair of Texas A&M University's Department of Wildlife and Fisheries Sciences, and *W.E. Grant*, a professor in the same department, were honored for work in the San Andrés Archipelago of Colombia. This group of tiny, densely populated Caribbean islands is ecologically fragile. PFE volunteers have performed valuable work on the islands, including organizing technical workshops and creating a plan for integrated ecosystem management.



Partners of the Americas

Rosario McFarland, who received the President's Volunteer Service Award Gold Level last year, was also honored as Partners of the Americas' Volunteer of the Year for her service as executive director of Partners' chapter in Texas.

VOLUNTEER STORY

“I knew that 10 days was not enough time to change the entire world, a nation, or even a city. However, due to eMi’s volunteers, some day one child’s world will be a different place.”

Chae-Un (June) Sin, a 24-year-old architect and eMi volunteer, put her drafting and design skills to work for 10 days in Cambodia to help a local community.

I worked on an eMi team of volunteer design professionals. Our daily activities in Cambodia consisted of visiting proposed sites to build a new school campus, meeting with staff to develop a design, and meeting local people to learn how traditional materials and cultural elements could be incorporated.

One day we were working near a floating village and saw a lot of children who were not in school. Instead they were playing with dirt, selling goods, or begging. One girl approached us to sell some muffins. After a while, a boy came and asked for food. These children needed help from people who would share their time, energy, and talents to provide a better life and education to those living on the streets.

Being part of a team that wants to meet such needs was a wonderful experience. I can still remember the smiles of the children we helped. Once a school is built, some of the children by the river may play on that school campus. The girl with muffins may receive education. The boy who was begging may be fed.

When the time came for us to leave the country, I knew that 10 days was not enough time to change the entire world, a nation, or even a city. However, due to eMi’s volunteers, someday one child’s world will be a different place. He will have food, go to school during the day, and sleep under a roof at night. Someone will call him by his name and show him love. Maybe changing the world starts with changing the world for one single soul.



Architect Chae-Un Sin (third from the right) worked with other members of this team of volunteer professionals from Engineering Ministries International to design a new school in Cambodia. The design incorporates local materials and cultural elements.

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE



Workers build a water system for a Nigerian hospital with the help of a volunteer with Partnership for the Environment, a VfP partner. Three PFE volunteers who worked on this project were honored with Presidential Volunteer Service Awards (see page 12).

Chris Strock

Given the importance of VfP's work to the nation's global health and prosperity agenda as well as to U.S. public diplomacy, the VfP Office will continue to expand the initiative's scope and impact in the coming year. Two areas of focus will include working directly with U.S. companies to create global volunteer programs for employees, and responding to other national governments' interest in adapting the VfP model.

To continue this forward movement, the VfP Office plans to

- continue outreach efforts by further strengthening relationships with existing VfP partners, developing new relationships with interested U.S. nonprofits and companies, and ensuring public recognition of greater numbers of volunteers
- develop new programs to benefit VfP partners
- establish a branding strategy that includes the development of a variety of promotional materials
- improve the functionality of the VfP website through additional new features, including a fully operational VfP Giving Portal
- develop strategic alliances with leading U.S.-based service organizations and U.S. corporations interested in creating or expanding in-house international volunteer programs for employees

VOLUNTEER STORY

“I was reminded that, even if one is technically very capable, staying power for a volunteer is built on support.”

Archie B. Wainright is a consulting engineer executive with over 30 years' experience in business and engineering. Last year he spent three months in Nicaragua, where he had worked previously, to share his technical expertise on several projects.

Nicaragua is among the poorest countries in the Western Hemisphere. The average wage there is one to two dollars a day—for the perhaps 40 percent of the population that can find jobs. I first became interested in Nicaragua after Hurricane Mitch tore through there in 1998, killing so many helpless people who were caught in its path of high winds, flooding, and mudslides.

In March 2005, I returned to Nicaragua. My initial contact was with U.S.-based Partners Worldwide, a VfP partner organization that was involved in school construction on the outskirts of Managua. For three months I helped to design tools for the cleanout of a deep water well for a cooperative coffee farm. I was also able to participate in the preliminary site planning for a women-owned cooperative textile mill and to help develop a training plan for municipal construction inspectors in Managua. This latter project was particularly exciting for me, since this type of training goes to the heart of disaster mitigation. Well-designed and well-constructed buildings help protect everyone in the event of natural disasters. Well-trained inspectors help to see that process through.

I was reminded that, even if one is technically very capable, staying power for a volunteer is built on support. The support that VfP partner organizations provide can make the investment of volunteer time much more valuable, useful, and enjoyable.

I gained far more from the experience than I gave. There is at the heart of these Nicaraguan people an awesome strength. They are industrious, dignified, and working hard for a better life for their children and themselves. Above all, I learned that most people will work for the positive if they can get even just a glimpse of a way to do that. Through all my experiences, and because of them, I am left with a sense of optimism and hope.



A Nicaraguan farmer (center) who was mentored by a Partners Worldwide volunteer now shares his knowledge with others. Here he talks with a cacao grower about his crop.

VFP AND THE U.S. GLOBAL HEALTH AND PROSPERITY AGENDA

The following six presidential initiatives comprise the U.S. global health and prosperity agenda supported by VFP:

- The President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR)
- Digital Freedom Initiative (DFI)
- Water for the Poor Initiative
- Trade for African Development and Enterprise (TRADE)
- The Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI)
- The Millennium Challenge Account (MCA)

Each initiative is directed by one or more of four federal departments and agencies: State, Commerce, HHS, and USAID. Each department or agency has its own VFP office or operating unit reporting to USAID's VFP Office, which is the interagency coordinator for VFP. USAID's VFP Office in turn reports to USA Freedom Corps, the White House office that coordinates all federally supported volunteer programs.

Partner organizations support many programs directly linked to these initiatives, and any partner that applies for a grant under one of the initiatives can receive special consideration under the Executive Order establishing VFP. While this does not guarantee success in obtaining federal grants, it makes applicants using skilled American volunteers more competitive for such funding.

The following section offers both a summary of the six initiatives and highlights of recent developments.

President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief

Directed by State and supported by HHS and USAID, PEPFAR is a five-year, \$15 billion initiative to combat the HIV/AIDS pandemic by targeting assistance to the 15 most afflicted countries in Africa, Asia, and the Caribbean. PEPFAR anticipates considerable volunteer opportunities for U.S. medical and related health-care professionals. The initiative's goals are to prevent 7 million new infections, treat 2 million HIV-infected people, and care for 10 million HIV-infected individuals and AIDS orphans.

American International Health Alliance



A U.S. volunteer from Bemidji, Minnesota, shares a smile with an HIV-positive boy at the Saratov AIDS Center. The volunteer was working through the American International Health Alliance's Saratov-Bemidji partnership.



An Engineering Ministries International volunteer team work on a school design onsite in Cambodia.

It is anticipated that volunteers will be placed in both short- and long-term assignments to strengthen local institutions' human and organizational capacity through training and technical assistance.

PEPFAR Highlights: In January 2005, a three-member consortium led by VFP partner American International Health Alliance (see page 22) won a grant from HHS's Health Resources and Services Administration to create an HIV/AIDS Twinning Center (TC). Twinning is a voluntary, formal, sustainable partnership between two or more similar organizations. TC partnerships are established to develop human and organizational capacity in HIV/AIDS prevention and care through exchange visits, training, and on-going communications and information support.

The TC will develop a volunteer-led program to provide training and technical assistance. In FY 2006 this program will also become a focal point and clearinghouse for networks of eligible volunteers to serve in PEPFAR-funded HIV/AIDS programs. The TC model will be applied principally in Africa, home to 12 of the 15 PEPFAR countries.

Digital Freedom Initiative

The United States is committed to helping countries bridge the digital divide for greater economic growth and opportunity. DFI promotes economic growth by transferring the benefits of

U.S. information and communication technology (ICT) to small businesses and entrepreneurs in the developing world. It also aims to help countries create a pro-competitive policy and regulatory environment through public-private partnerships. DFI is led by Commerce, with support from USAID. The first VFP volunteers were information technology professionals helping small businesses in Senegal through a DFI pilot program in 2003. The success of DFI in Senegal, with a budget estimated at \$6.5 million over three years, led to expansion of the initiative into Peru, Indonesia, and most recently Jordan. Ultimately, the initiative will reach 20 countries.

Key goals of the initiative include

- enabling innovation through volunteer-led assistance to businesses and entrepreneurs

VFP AND THE U.S. GLOBAL HEALTH AND PROSPERITY AGENDA

- driving pro-growth legal and regulatory reform to enhance business competitiveness
- building on existing ICT infrastructure to promote economic growth

DFI Highlights: DFI is progressing well in all four participating countries. Notably, DFI/Jordan has reported over \$7 million invested in DFI activities, including a youth internship program that trains and places participants in community internet centers (called “knowledge stations”) and a program that helps information technology firms improve their management and marketing skills. DFI projects implemented in Senegal during FY 2004–05 benefited more than 100 private organizations.

Water for the Poor Initiative

Managed by USAID, this initiative seeks to improve the sustainable management of freshwater and coastal resources in developing countries. The overall goal is to accelerate and expand international efforts to substantially increase worldwide access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation. Key elements of this initiative include broadening access to clean water and sanitation services, improving watershed management, and increasing the productivity of water use.

Water for the Poor Initiative Highlights: The initiative committed an estimated \$1.8 billion in more than 70 developing countries during FY 2003–05. Over 12 million people received improved access to clean water, and over 21 million received improved access to adequate sanitation.

Trade for African Development and Enterprise

This five-year initiative is managed by USAID and supported by three regional global competitiveness hubs in Kenya, Ghana, and Botswana. A fourth hub in Senegal has been announced. The purpose of these hubs is to strengthen the ability of African companies and businesses to expand regional and international trade; help them mainstream trade into their development agendas; and increase U.S. trade with Africa. TRADE enables African countries to take



A Coastal Resources Center volunteer demonstrates methods of measuring dike and pond elevations to Tanzanian fish farmers.



Dr. Mike Pendleton, a Northwest Medical Teams International volunteer from Hood River, Oregon, weighs a Sudanese baby using a portable scale.

advantage of the increased trade opportunities with the United States provided by the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) and the AGOA Acceleration Act of 2004. TRADE supports efforts linking American and African businesses, strengthening the business environment for African businesses, and developing public services and policies that support trade. The initiative has been making steady progress toward the goal of increasing trade with the United States and within Africa.

TRADE Highlights: A VfP partner, International Executive Service Corps (IESC), designed the Africa Fast Track Trade Program (AFTT) as a resource for the TRADE hubs and other USAID programs to fill a critical gap in the mix of trade and business support services. The goal of AFTT is to increase exports of private enterprises in the 48 AGOA-eligible countries, thereby increasing economic growth and prosperity.

Twenty-one African companies assisted by AFTT through financial or staff support

VFP AND THE U.S. GLOBAL HEALTH AND PROSPERITY AGENDA

participated in U.S. trade shows that resulted in potential business transactions. AFTT has helped increase exports to the United States of selected products.

Middle East Partnership Initiative

Managed by State, MEPI works with governments and citizens of the Middle East and North Africa to design and fund projects supporting political, economic, and educational reform and the empowerment of women. MEPI

and its partners have negotiated agreements with nongovernmental organizations, the private sector, and other U.S. agencies to implement projects. For FY 2002–05 MEPI's budget was \$293 million, including \$74 million in FY 2005. Key elements of the initiative include promoting financial sector reforms, supporting business linkages, and developing entrepreneurship.

MEPI Highlights: Working with over 100 organizations during 2005, MEPI awarded 14 new grants, ranging from timely aid to support Palestinian independent media to grassroots support for civil society participation in Egypt, Yemen, and Lebanon. MEPI awardees for 2004 and 2005 include four nonprofits that are VFP partners:

- *Citizens Development Corps*, a Washington, D.C.-based nonprofit, supports private sector development and economic growth in emerging and transitioning economies throughout the world.
- *International Executive Service Corps*, also in Washington, D.C., is one of the world's largest nonprofit economic development organizations and is active in more than 55 countries.
- *The Financial Services Volunteer Corps*, based in New York City, is a not-for-profit, private-public partnership whose mission is to help build sound banking and financial systems in transitional and developing countries.
- *ACDI/VOCA*, a private nonprofit organization based in Washington, D.C., promotes broad-based economic growth and the development of civil society in emerging democracies and developing countries. The name ACDI/



Volunteers from two VFP partners—Engineering Ministries International and Samaritan's Purse—help distribute relief supplies in Tangi Saidan, Afghanistan.

Kenneth Brewer, volunteer, Engineering Ministries International

VOCA dates back to the 1997 merger of Agricultural Cooperative Development International and Volunteers in Overseas Cooperative Assistance.

In addition to these four nonprofits, MEPI worked with 43 for-profit organizations in FY 2005.

Millennium Challenge Account

On January 23, 2004, the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) was established to administer the MCA, an innovative foreign assistance program designed to make U.S. aid more effective. Congress appropriated slightly less than \$1 billion for the MCA's inaugural year, and \$1.5 billion in FY 2005. The President has requested increasing MCA's annual funding to \$5 billion in the future.

The MCC provides development assistance by rewarding countries that have sound policies and good governance. MCA seeks to reduce poverty by significantly increasing economic growth through targeted investments in recipient countries. To be eligible for assistance, countries must demonstrate commitment to ruling justly, investing in people, and encouraging economic freedom. These attributes are critical to poverty reduction and economic growth in developing countries.

MCA Highlights: During FY 2005 the MCC signed multiyear compacts with Madagascar, Honduras, Cape Verde, Nicaragua, and Georgia. Compacts set forth a commitment between the



Kenneth Brewer

A team of volunteers from Engineering Ministries International observe reinforced concrete construction practices in Siliguri, West Bengal, India.

United States and the developing country to meet performance benchmarks. Since it began receiving country proposals in FY 2004, the MCC has approved over \$600 million in compact and pre-compact funding in nine countries. Of equal importance, independent observers report they are already seeing an “MCC effect” on governance as countries implement significant reforms to improve their chances of qualifying for MCA funding.

VFP PARTNER PROFILES

The success of VFP is due to the initiative's partners—both companies and nonprofits—and its volunteers. Partners listed below deployed many of the volunteers highlighted in this annual report.

American International Health Alliance

The American International Health Alliance (AIHA), based in Washington, D.C., advances global health through volunteer-driven twinning partnerships and other efforts. AIHA's programs mobilize communities to better address health-care priorities, while improving productivity

and quality of care. An AIHA twinning partnership is a formal agreement between U.S. healthcare providers and their counterparts overseas, who collaborate to develop a workplan detailing goals and objectives to be achieved through information sharing. AIHA's volunteers represent the full range of health professionals: physicians, registered nurses, medical or health systems technicians, healthcare administrators, and university faculty.

Coastal Resources Center

The Coastal Resources Center (CRC) at the University of Rhode Island is dedicated to advancing leading-edge coastal management techniques in the United States and is also active in promoting the sustainable use of coastal resources in countries throughout the world. In 2000, the CRC established a formal volunteer program, and both promotion and support for international volunteers are included as objectives of the Sustainable Coastal Communities and Ecosystems (SUCCESS) program. International volunteer assignments are geared toward working professionals who have at least five years of experience and are willing to spend several weeks working in a developing country.

Engineering Ministries International

Engineering Ministries International (eMi), of Colorado Springs, Colorado, is a nonprofit Christian organization made up of architects,



Dr. Tom Hoggard, a volunteer with Northwest Medical Teams International, examines a young Sri Lankan patient.



Wes Weston pauses during work on a Habitat for Humanity building site in Costa Rica, where he served 10 months as the area volunteer coordinator for Latin America and the Caribbean. With a background in business management, Wes became the first member of Habitat's International Volunteer Program, which places skilled long-term volunteers in various specialized positions.

engineers, and design professionals who donate their skills to serve the poor in developing countries. eMi designs facilities (including buildings, roads, clean water projects and more) that are produced by a team of in-house project managers and volunteer engineers, architects,

land surveyors, and construction managers. The volunteers donate their time and travel costs to join eMi teams, adding their expertise and insight to create quality designs. Since 1981, eMi has completed over 500 relief and development projects in nearly 75 countries.

Habitat for Humanity International

Habitat for Humanity International is a non-profit, ecumenical Christian housing organization based in Americus, Georgia. Since 1976, Habitat has built more than 200,000 houses, providing shelter for nearly 900,000 people worldwide. At work in 100 countries, it is currently running a pilot of its International Volunteer Program (IVP). The IVP has two types of volunteers: construction volunteers and special project volunteers. The program's projects will help upgrade skills in many areas of the organization worldwide, such as administration, communications, finance, programs, resource development, construction supervision, and training. The IVP program requires a volunteer commitment of three to 24 months.

Northwest Medical Teams International

For 26 years, Northwest Medical Teams International (NWMTI), of Portland, Oregon, has recruited and equipped teams of international healthcare professionals and other volunteers to work on short-term assignments in countries where people have been affected by disaster,

VFP PARTNER PROFILES

conflict, and poverty. From July 2004 to June 2005, NWMTI deployed 182 teams totaling over 800 volunteers to 31 countries. Volunteers are primarily health professionals, including doctors, nurses, surgeons, dentists, dental hygienists, massage therapists, nutritionists, and paramedics/EMTs. In addition to caring for patients, these professionals train local health workers in modern medical practices.



Partners of the Americas

Partners of the Americas volunteer Tom Hymel, of Jeanerette, Louisiana, works with two fish farmers to help improve their tilapia operation on Lake Ilopango, El Salvador.

Partners of the Americas

Founded in 1964, Partners of the Americas, a private, nonprofit organization in Washington, D.C., links U.S. states with Latin American and Caribbean countries in partnerships that use the energy and skills of citizen volunteers, their institutions, and communities to address shared concerns of social, economic, and cultural development. Partner volunteers and professional staff build on these linkages to pursue a wide array of activities and programs. Their work covers areas as diverse as emergency preparedness, agriculture, cultural exchange, preventing domestic violence, and strengthening local government.

Partnership for the Environment

Partnership for the Environment (PFE) is a nonprofit corporation in Dallas, Texas, that provides expertise and services to improve water resources for health and agriculture in environmentally disadvantaged communities worldwide. Its objectives include strengthening local capacities; partnering with existing agencies, public institutions, and community groups; integrating overall project goals with local development needs; and creating positive economic incentives. Projects range from a sanitation system in Macedonia and clean water in Ethiopia to integrated ecosystem management in Colombia.

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